

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 20-38 were pending in the application, of which Claims 20, 35, and 36 are independent. Claims 36-38 have been previously withdrawn from consideration. In the Final Office Action dated December 2, 2003, Claims 20-23, 27, and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e), Claims 24-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a), and Claims 28-34 were objected to, but were deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Following this response, Claims 20-27 and 29-35 remain under consideration in this application. Applicants hereby address the Examiner's rejections in turn.

I. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

In the Final Office Action dated December 2, 2003, the Examiner rejected Claims 20-23, 27, and 35 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,262,375 ("*Engelhardt*"). Claims 20 and 35 have been amended to include the recitation of allowed Claim 28, and Applicants respectfully submit that the amendments overcome this rejection and add no new matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of independent Claims 20 and 35. Claim 28 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 29, 32, and 33 have been amended to comport with the amendment to Claim 20 and the cancellation of Claim 28.

Dependent Claims 21-27 and 29-34 are also allowable at least for the reasons above regarding independent Claim 20, and by virtue of their dependency upon

independent Claim 20. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of dependent Claims 21-27 and the objection to dependent Claims 29-34.

II. Conclusion

Applicants respectfully request that this Amendment After Final be entered by the Examiner, placing the claims in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully submit that the proposed amendments of the claims do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships claimed were either earlier claimed or inherent in the claims as examined. Therefore, this Amendment should allow for immediate action by the Examiner.

Finally, Applicants respectfully submit that the entry of the Amendment would place the application in better form for appeal, should the Examiner dispute the patentability of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that the claimed invention, as amended, is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of the prior art references cited against this application. Applicants therefore request the entry of this Amendment, the Examiner's reconsideration and reexamination of the application, and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the pending claims, as amended, are patentable over the cited references. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Official Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the

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Official Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this amendment and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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